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THOMAS J. VILSACK  
GOVERNOR

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SALLY J. PEDERSON  
LT. GOVERNOR

December 02, 2005

Christa Dean  
Section of Environmental Analysis  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20423



Dear Ms. Dean:

I am writing in response to a letter from Victoria Rutson notifying me of the proposed construction of a rail line by Roquette America, Inc. (Roquette) in Keokuk, Iowa. After consulting with the Iowa Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation, Cultural Affairs, and Economic Development regarding potential issues outlined in your initial correspondence, I recommend that the project move forward expeditiously.

In terms of socioeconomics, the project is located in an area of the state that would benefit from industrial development. The four county area surrounding the project (Henry, Lee, Louisa, and Des Moines) have had negative population growth, unemployment higher than the state average, and per capita personal income lower than the state average:

### County Population

	2004*	2003*	2002*	2001*	2000
Des Moines	40,857	41,243	41,456	41,969	42,291
Henry	20,258	20,263	20,103	20,353	20,302
Lee	36,726	36,732	37,004	37,505	37,939
Louisa	12,132	12,256	12,222	12,214	12,172
Total	109,973	110,494	110,785	112,041	112,704

\*estimates

Source: Census Bureau

### September 2005 Unemployment

Counties	Rate	Persons
Des Moines	5.2%	1,090
Henry	5.2%	550
Lee	7.0%	1,220
Louisa	3.9%	260
Total		3,120

Iowa 4.3%

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

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	Per Capita Personal Income*	2003 County Rank*	1993 County Rank	Total Personal Income*	2003 County Rank*	1993 County Rank
Des Moines	\$27,554	24th	15th	\$1,136,428	15th	13th
Henry	\$24,291	69th	34th	\$492,207	35th	32nd
Lee	\$25,226	53rd	38th	\$926,603	19th	17th
Louisa	\$24,590	61st	55th	\$301,381	65th	68th
Iowa	\$28,340			\$83.4 billion		
	*2003			*2003		

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

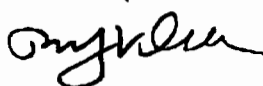
This data demonstrates the need for increased economic development and growth within the area.

With respect to the transportation system, any impact would be minimal. Because there will be no change in the number of shipments due to this project, the impact on the larger rail system or highway system would be insignificant. Additionally, this project would cause no impact on the level of barge traffic or service. The most obvious impact to the transportation system, although minor, would be in the immediate area and result from a potential shifting of shipments from one carrier to another due to competitive rates and lower transportation costs for the shipper. Given that the minimal traffic on the local road primarily serves the industrial area (two trains per day), safety at the crossing should not be significantly jeopardized.

As for issues concerning effects on the environment and historic or cultural sites, I would direct you to review the letters to you from Diane Ford-Shivvers (dated 11/14/05) and Christine M. Schwake (dated 11/28/05) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the letter from Douglas W. Jones (dated 11/15/05) of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Thank you for inviting comment on this matter. Please accept this letter as an endorsement of connecting Roquette's rail infrastructure with the existing rail line of the BNSF Company.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Vilsack  
Governor